

May 1, 2005

Freedom Watch

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan



***Military Police save
lives in fire at Kandahar
International Airport***

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Thank you

To the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines and civilians of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, I want to say thanks for your daily heroic efforts here in the region as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

As I depart command of this great team after 19 months, I can clearly look back and say that your actions have made a difference. Afghanistan and the region are far safer and more secure places today because of your unrelenting efforts. Whether you are a private or lance corporal, master chief or chief petty officer, lieutenant or lieutenant commander, you personally make an impact that is felt here every day.

We have experienced tough times as well as triumphs, and 81 of our fellow troopers have paid the ultimate price to help secure freedom in this remote corner of the world. We mourn their loss along with each of their families - but we resolve to continue the mission each of them made the ultimate sacrifice to support. We will always remember their spirit and their sacrifices deep in our hearts.

The Afghan people now have a democratic government, a sound constitution preserving their rights, and most importantly, a bright future with a powerful sense of hope, which your commitment has secured. Every one of you can take pride in these accomplishments and feel rewarded in knowing that you are making a tremendous difference in the lives of everyday people here.

As I say farewell, I know you will continue to uphold these vital goals and commit yourselves as always to completing our mission, no matter what obstacles may arise. It has been my personal and professional privilege to have served beside you in this combat theater for 19 months. Take care of yourselves, watch out for your buddies, and keep driving on!

Lt. Gen. David Barno

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- Cover photo courtesy of 202nd MP Company

Spc. Jason Krawczyk

Master Sgt. Philip Melton, of Alpha Co., Headquarters Detachment, 7th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, pays his respects to the fallen heroes of Big Windy April 13. The five Soldiers lost their lives doing what they loved, flying.

"I believe it is the highest honor to serve as a Soldier in pursuit of terrorists, spreading security and freedom to the people of Afghanistan, Iraq and many other areas of the world," said Melton. "The cost of freedom is sometimes paid by the men and women on the front line. That loss is unwanted but understood by those of us who serve. The families of these fallen heroes pay the ultimate price for the freedom and security of our families and country. These great men have touched my warrior spirit with their sacrifice; my thoughts, hopes and prayers go out to the families for strength and understanding."



Freedom Watch

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MPs save Afgans from fire

Story by

Sgt. Douglas DeMaio

20th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Three military police officers saved six Afghans from a burning building here April 4.

Spc. Aaron Wittrock, Pfc. Brandon Stover, and Pfc. Andy Roe were conducting training during the morning when they saw black smoke rising from the Kandahar International Airport.

"Part of our training is to respond to different emergencies, so when we saw it, we had to go over and help out," said Wittrock.

After sprinting several hundred feet, the 202nd MP Company Soldiers arrived on the scene and noticed a local resident who was working on the building moving around inside.

"We saw the fire and knew we needed to act," Stover said. The three Soldiers entered the building through a window and immediately felt the effects of their decision.

"We didn't realize the extent of how big the fire was," Stover said.

Little did these MPs from Fort Eustis, Va., know that their act of bravery was beginning to reach a point of threatening their own lives.

"It was hot and there was black smoke everywhere," Roe said. "The paint on the wall was melting."

As the men made it through the building, they went from room to room. Finding two people in immediate danger, the MPs tried to encourage the Afghans to move, but they sat in shock from the flames that surrounded them. It was then that the emergency responders grabbed hold of the



Photos courtesy of 202nd MP Company



Afghans and dragged them out of the building.

"The flames were coming through the roof and the smoke was getting lower and lower," Stover said. "The blaze was cooking us."

On the way out, the MPs had to pass through one smoke-filled portion of the

building to save their own lives. They couldn't even see each other as they tried to work their way out of the building.

As the Soldiers exited the building, they were certain to be recommended for an award for their bravery and for saving the lives of men they will probably never see again.

But the Soldiers didn't put their lives on the line for a medal, Stover said. The Soldiers did it because it needed to be done.

"We didn't do this to get an award; we did it because we saw a problem and needed to fix it," Wittrock said.



Spc. Aaron Wittrock



Pfc. Andy Roe



Pfc. Brandon Stover

Marines get new look at enemy

Dragon Eye keeps terrorists on the run in Khowst

Story and photos by

Cpl. Rich Mattingly

3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines

KHOWST PROVINCE, Afghanistan – With a low, buzzing sound, the unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicle known to Marines as Dragon Eye swooped over the patrol leader's head and out through the jagged, mountainous terrain, ever watchful through its two nose-mounted cameras.

In close radio contact with its operator located a few miles away, the Dragon Eye monitored a site from which the patrol believed terrorists recently fired rockets at the Marines.

The use of the Dragon Eye by the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, "America's Battalion," in Afghanistan marks the first use of Marine Corps unmanned aerial vehicles in the Operation Enduring Freedom theater.

On the heels of its successful employment during Operation Iraqi Freedom in Fallujah, the Marines of 3/3 are using the Dragon Eye in the high elevations and difficult terrain of eastern Afghanistan to gain an important advantage over insurgent threats.

The small Kevlar and fiberglass vehicle has given Marines on the ground a whole new perspective and tactical edge.

Just a few years since being designed at the USMC Warfighting Lab, the Dragon Eye is coming into its own as "over-the-next-hill, around-the-next-corner" surveillance technology. The Dragon Eye can go completely unnoticed by the enemy, weighing in at just five pounds and leaving only the radar signature of a bird.

The Dragon Eye is being used by every company in America's Battalion, including Headquarters and Service Company, which has been task-organized to conduct provisional rifle company operations.

"They don't see or hear the Dragon Eye at all when I raise the altitude," said Cpl. Richard Derby, the battalion maintenance chief, and HSC's Dragon Eye operator. "I can see what the

enemy is doing without alerting them or putting a nearby patrol in danger."

Derby added that the Dragon Eye could also be a powerful deterrent when flown at lower altitudes. "People tend to scurry away when they see it coming in low," he said.

The Dragon Eye can be easily deployed by two Marines using a large rubber band or even a running start. The Dragon Eye is specifically designed for the kind of small-unit fight the Marines of America's Battalion are experiencing here.

When man-hours are a precious commodity, and a commander needs real-time intelligence and situational awareness in his battle space, the Dragon Eye comes into play.

"We use it to check out potential rocket points of origin and improvised explosive devices, or even fighting positions that Marines might have difficulty picking out from the ground," said Staff Sgt. Khalif Ahmad, a platoon sergeant with HSC. "It's definitely keeping

our situational awareness at a higher level."

The aircraft can record video and still camera shots of the battlefield, all of which are relayed in real-time to the operator.

"While squads are out searching an area, I can fly the Dragon Eye to more outlying areas to see what's going on," said Derby. "It saves us a lot of time and increases our effectiveness."

The USMC Warfighting lab has designed the Dragon Eye to be extremely easy to use. Unlike other unmanned aerial vehicles that require constant control, the Dragon Eye is controlled by a small laptop computer, on which operators can enter a preset route and concentrate on monitoring the cameras through a glasses-like video screen.

"I'm the eyes aloft for the patrol leader, and I'm always just a call away when he needs more information or needs me to check out an area," said Derby.



(Above) Corporal Richard Derby, battalion maintenance chief and Dragon Eye operator with Headquarters and Service Co., 3rd Batt., 3rd Marines, monitors the Dragon Eye's cameras during operations in eastern Afghanistan.



(Left) Derby launches a Dragon Eye over the mountains of Afghanistan.

Soldiers resuscitate drowned boy

Story and photo by
Spc. Jason Krawczyk
20th Public Affairs Detachment

GHAZNI, Afghanistan – Life in Afghanistan is hard.

It's one of the top three most mined countries in the world, they have had two decades of war, and in the last year they have had more rain than in the last thirty.

The rain and the snow melt-off has swollen the rivers and caused them to break their banks, causing severe flooding throughout Afghanistan.

The 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, conducted a village assessment to see what damages the flood had caused when the residents approached them about a casualty.

"I went to the beach and began to set up my tools to clear an airway, as the locals brought the boy to me," said Spc. Matt Crumpton, a medic with 3rd Batt.

They carried the boy about 20 meters to Crumpton.

"The boy was blue and lifeless; he looked dead," said Crumpton.

They laid the boy down and removed his clothes. Crumpton performed a modified jaw thrust to clear the boy's airway.

"After the modified jaw thrust, a combat life saver joined me and kept the boy's airway clear while I tested the boy for responsiveness," said Crumpton.

The boy responded to Crumpton's efforts and began to show signs of life. Crumpton turned the shivering, half-naked boy on his side so he could vomit up some of the material in his lungs.

"The boy had swallowed a lot of grass and dirt in his 20 minute struggle for life in the river," said Crumpton.

In the meantime, a Chinook took off from Ghazni to evacuate the child to medical facilities.

"The helicopter was on scene in 15 minutes," said Crumpton. "Three CLSs and I loaded the boy in the helicopter. Me, his father, and one other CLS

accompanied him to the 3-116th battalion medical facility at Ghazni."

Once the boy arrived at Ghazni, there was a team of eight medics and one doctor there to continue to try and stabilize the boy.

At Ghazni, the doctors could not get his vital signs because they were so weak. His temperature was less than 86 degrees. The medics began procedures to rapidly warm him as soon as he arrived, and put him on oxygen.

"After a while, the boy had stabilized. Once we removed the oxygen, his levels became dangerously low. We made the call to transport him to Bagram Airfield Hospital," said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Alan Towne, a battalion surgeon with 3-116th.

The boy, his father, and one medic made the trip to BAF. Once there, the doctors took over and continued to work on the boy. The boy is expected to make a full recovery.

"Knowing we saved that boy's life made all the bad things that happened on this deployment seem worth it," said Crumpton.



Soldiers from 3rd Batt., 116th Inf., saved a child's life during recent floods. Right to left are 2nd Lt. Terry Schiffler, Sgts. William Wright, Seth Hooper and Jonthan Glasscock, Spcs. Jesse Wastler and Seok Song, Lt. Col. Alan Towne, Pfc. Pat Whitson, Spc. Matt Crumpton, Staff Sgt. Innis Bryant, and Spcs. Joshua Waddell and Ronald Vanderveer.

Enduring Voices

What do you miss the most about home?



Sgt. Keith Cole
202nd Military Police
Company, Fort Eustis, Va.
*"I miss my family, partying
and all my friends."*



Staff Sgt. Gulstan Poepoe
Army, 298th Engineer
Detachment, Hawaii National
Guard
*"I miss all the different type
of food you can eat back in
Hawaii."*



Maj. Robert Macaraeg
Army, Kandahar Base
Operations
*"I miss my wife and two
daughters, and I miss the
Boston Red Sox playing on
television."*



Signaller Paul Cocker
New Zealand Provincial
Reconstruction Team
*"The green foliage and
going to the beach."*

Rumsfeld visits Qalat

Thanks troops, speaks at town-hall meeting, participates in re-enlistment ceremony

Story and photos by
Sgt. Douglas DeMaio
20th Public Affairs Detachment

K A N D A H A R , Afghanistan – Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld met with troops here April 13 to participate in a reenlistment ceremony and answer service members' questions during a town hall meeting held in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation tent.

During his five-hour visit, Rumsfeld toured Forward Operating Base Lagman in Qalat and thanked the troops for their service.

"It's a privilege to be here and to be able to personally thank each of you for your service to the country," Rumsfeld said. "I should add to thank your families for

their service to the country, because they too sacrifice."

Rumsfeld said that this trip is his ninth to Afghanistan since the war, and that he is reminded of the men and women in uniform who have done so much to help the Afghan people forge a new future.

"Each of you stands as an example of giving to a cause larger than yourself," he said.

Rumsfeld told the troops of a recent ceremony he attended that honored an individual who displayed this type of selfless service.

"I think you would agree that President (George W.) Bush could have made no finer choice for the recipient of the first Medal of Honor in the global war on terror than Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray

Smith of the United States Army," Rumsfeld said.

Smith received the medal posthumously April 4, two years to the day in which he was killed in action with the enemy.

Rumsfeld explained how Smith's actions will be remembered and how the military service of the men and women in Afghanistan will be remembered.

"I doubt that the Sailors fighting at Midway Island in the Pacific or the Soldiers charging down Little Round Top at Gettysburg realized they were taking part in some of the

most important battles in history," he said. "And

one day you will learn what it is that will be said of you."

Freeing some 25 million people in Afghanistan from an extremist regime and providing Afghans with a government that represents the people is a cause worth fighting for, Rumsfeld said.

"If anyone here doesn't know if

what's being done is making a difference, listen to what Sergeant Smith's widow said last week when she accepted the Medal of Honor on his behalf," he said. "Sixty years ago, American Soldiers liberated the German people from tyranny in World War II. Today, another generation of American Soldiers has given the Iraqis and the Afghan people a birth of freedom."

Rumsfeld ended the town hall meeting answering questions on retention and operational tempo asked by the troops.



Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld walks with Lt. Gen. David W. Barno, Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan commander, in Kandahar, prior to leaving on a CH-47 Chinook to visit Forward Operating Base Lagman in Qalat.



Lt. Gen. David W. Barno gives the oath of enlistment to 11 Soldiers with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld during a reenlistment ceremony in Kandahar, Afghanistan, April 13.

Soldiers, ANP work together

Recon troops build trust with local police

Story and photo by
Sgt. Jason Krawczyk
20th Public Affairs Detachment

GHAZNI, Afghanistan -The Soldiers of Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, and the Afghanistan National Police worked together April 2 for the first time in the searching of a village outside Ghazni.

"The local police have a better understanding of the area. It's where some of them grew up, and they are here every day," said Sgt. 1st Class Chris Myhand, platoon sergeant, and a police officer in the Washington, D.C., metro area.

April 3 was one of the first times the platoon had gone through the villages with the local police. They were searching for ordnance and possible anti-Coalition militants.

"The purpose of that day was to search for those things, but more to build a relationship with the police and gain trust between us," said sniper

squad leader Sgt. Robert Jones.

After the police and Soldiers finished searching the village and surrounding hills, they headed to the police station to eat and discuss future operations.

"The talks seemed more like the kind of talks I witnessed between the FBI and police back home," said

Myhand.

"No police officer likes it when someone from another place comes in and does their job, so we are not trying to do that. We want to work with them and exploit their expertise and ties in the area."

Since their arrival, scouts from 3-

116th have gone on over 200 combat patrols and found more than 20 caches. "Our relationship with the local police can help us better use our resources and concentrate our forces with theirs to hopefully turn up more caches and ACM,"

Myhand said.



Sgt. Robert Jones, Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, watches a local police officer as he searches a porch in Ghazni.

Earn more money while deployed

Story and photo by
Capt. Patrick Sampsell
208th Finance Battalion

Do you remember when you were young being told "nothing good is ever free," and "if it sounds too good to be true then it probably is"?

The U.S. government offers any service member serving in a designated combat zone, qualified hazardous duty area, or serving in direct support of a combat zone, an opportunity to participate in a savings program that is free, guaranteed, and fully backed by the U.S. government.

Whether you are an Active, Reserve or National Guard Soldier, you are eligible to contribute up to \$10,000 to a no-risk, no-fee, program that pays you 10 percent interest per annum, compounded quarterly. Moreover, you can leave funds in the program for up to 90 days after redeployment and the account will continue to draw interest.

Service members are able to contribute to their SDP account

on a monthly basis. The maximum amount that can be contributed per month is limited to the individual's unallotted income, the amount remaining after the collection and payment of all existing taxes, allotments and debt obligations. Deposits to the program made on or before the 10th of the month accrue interest from the 1st of the month. Deposits made after the 10th of the month accrue interest from the first day of the following month.

Service members are able to make deposits into the SDP after serving 30 consecutive days in a designated area or by spending one day per month for three consecutive months in a designated area. In order to establish your SDP account, visit your local finance office with a copy of a current Leave and Earnings Statement and make a deposit by cash, check, or money order. With an appropriate power of attorney, outside parties are authorized to make deposits into the SDP program, as long as the deposit does not exceed the service member's monthly disposable income.

There are limitations on when the money may be withdrawn. It is intended that deposits made to the SDP remain in the SDP, at a minimum, until redeployment or Permanent Change of Station. Withdrawals are limited during the time within the designated area to only those necessary to preserve the health or welfare of the service member or their family. Additionally, any interest accruing in the account which caus-

See Savings Page 13

Red Devils roll through

Story and photos by
Sgt. Adrian Schulte
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

FOB ORGUN-E, Afghanistan – As the sun rose on a brisk Afghan morning, a platoon of paratroopers from A Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment loaded their gear and clambered aboard Humvees.

During the patrol, some infantrymen rode inside the trucks while others crowded into the backs of open-bed Humvees, exposed to the elements. Their role is clear: patrol the countryside for security and maintain relationships with local leaders. They oversee Paktika Province, a strategically important area in the southeastern part of the country that shares a border with Pakistan.

During a recent patrol, troops from 1st Platoon, along with Soldiers from the battalion's mortar and maintenance sections, headed north from their headquarters at Forward Operating Base Orgun-E to the villages of Zarok and Naka.

They looked to make sure the roads are free of enemy activity and checked with the local officials to see where help is needed.

"Once we get up there, we try to work very closely with the government," said Staff Sgt. Timothy Jensen, a squad leader with A Co. "We try to meet with the mayors and police departments to assess their abilities. We find out any equipment they might need to help them better do their job."

Their patrol is also about getting the people of the villages used to seeing American Soldiers and to teach them that they are there to help them, Jensen said.


As the Soldiers left their camp, children ran along the sides of the trucks waving or giving a thumbs up. Afghan men also gave a friendly wave or smile.

Near the base, the attitude toward Americans was generally positive, but as the paratroopers ventured farther from their stronghold, the feelings were mixed.

Jensen said that in the valley the people seem friendly and appreciate what they do there. "You don't get the same warm feeling when you go up to the Zarok and Naka region. Zarok is a little friendlier to us but we have been told to expect that Naka is not," said Jensen.

Some residents in Naka refused human-

continued on next page



A Soldier from 1st Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, crosses a river while inspecting suspicious activity.



Spec. Jesse Davis, 1st Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, shows some children their pictures on his digital camera during a patrol in the town of Naka.

continued from previous page

itarian assistance recently, Jensen said.

"Right now our primary focus is to get up there and show a large presence and show that we are their friends and want to work with them," he said. "Just in my three missions up there, they are getting a lot more receptive to Coalition forces and getting accustomed to why we are there. We are there to help."

The primary message the Soldiers are trying to push is that it is not the United States helping them - it is the United States in cooperation with the Afghan national government, Jensen said.

These patrols are key to changing the attitudes in these areas, said 1st Lt. Justin Freeland, the platoon leader for 1st Platoon. The troops say that they want to visit these villages as much as possible to further the process along. If the weather cooperates, Red Devils will attempt to visit the villages each week.

Along the way, the convoy stopped to



Soldiers from the mortar section, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, set up their mortar to provide security during a patrol in the Paktika Province.

Vicenza, Italy, which has a much lower altitude, and are still getting acclimated to the height.

"Getting the Soldiers up to a lot of these ridgelines and hilltops, we are running a little bit of a stumbling block," Jensen said. "Fortunately we have a great gym facility on post so we can do a lot of cardio workouts to help speed up the process. We have been told to plan for about a two-month acclimatization period to fully get used to it. We are trying to speed that up a bit."

Once at Naka, the troops set up security in a police compound while the leaders talked. One squad headed into the town to patrol. While there, they stopped in the local clinic. A medic checked with the Afghan staff to see what they have and what they need.

The troops then walked through the village interacting with the locals. Curiosity abounded on both sides. Some kids showed off their sling-shot skills while other villagers crowded around one Red Devil who showed them their image on his digital camera. Back at the compound, the Soldiers rested and got to know their Afghan police allies.

After the meeting, the troops mounted up, said goodbye and headed to Zarok. As the sun set, the Humvees

allow the company to inspect suspicious activity or to await close air support from helicopter gunships or Air Force A-10 Thunderbolts.

Treks like this are "high adventure" for the paratroopers of the 508th. At more than 7,500 feet in some areas, climbing up a hill in full battle gear will exhaust even the fittest infantryman. The troops are from

rolled into another police compound and the troops set up their defensive positions for the night.

The leaders went to talk to the local mayor and police chief. The village leaders greeted Freeland and Capt. Jack Kilbride, the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, with hugs and smiles. The men sat on the floor of a small, warm room to discuss business over chai tea and cakes. Freeland and Kilbride discussed what they can do to make the mayor's and police chief's jobs easier.

Freeland said that he wants to get a system in place for the police so that they are trained, have checkpoints, are getting paid, and are a professional organization that people can look to and use to provide stability for the region.

After business was finished, a couple more of the troops were invited in for dinner. The mayor, Abdul Mobeen, a humorous man who smiled and laughed as he spoke to the Americans, spent the rest of the evening getting to know some of the Coalition troops - his allies for the coming year.



Soldiers from A Company conduct a presence patrol through Naka.

Mobeen cleared out three small rooms for the Americans to sleep in. Many Soldiers had to sleep on the porch of the building or in their trucks.

After sunrise, as the Red Devils headed out, Mobeen led the convoy to a few places he wants checkpoints established and to a site where the Americans will soon fund a new school.

"Every patrol makes a difference," Jensen said. "If just our presence deters somebody from setting up a rocket to hit Coalition forces, we have made a difference. Just by the population up there being more receptive to us and talking more openly to us is showing that we are making a difference in an area that we were told did not like us."

Germans, Americans trade shots

Marksmanship training brings forces together, builds skills, forms bonds between countries

Story and photos by
Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - German and American troops had an opportunity to qualify with each other's weapons and earn the other country's marksmanship award during Schutzenschnur qualification at Bagram Airfield's East River Range April 6.

The competition is a good chance for troops to test their proficiency, earn a foreign award - and have some fun at the same time.

Master Sgt. Thomas Göttmann of the German Signal Battalion said that they try to conduct the shoot once a month.

Since 2002, the German Coalition forces here have been inviting American troops to come to the range and participate in their modified traditional shooting competition.

"Many people were astonished that

they could get the Schutzenschnur here," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Conrad of 2nd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery, Task Force Eagle. Conrad was the U.S. forces coordinator for the event, and assisted Göttmann in

range control and troop instruction.

Soldiers from 2nd Bn., 265th ADA, Task Force 168, Airmen from Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal, and German Coalition Soldiers qualified.

"I try to get range control to take charge and coordinate dates so we can make this happen," said Conrad. "Everyone has to be flexible and find time in their schedules to do this."

American troops who wish to qualify with the Germans can present their interest to their command-

(Top) Capt. Gary D. Benda, a service and support officer from Task Force 168, takes aim alongside other Soldiers during qualifications.

(Left) Staff Sgt. Allen J. Buxengard, an Albert Lee, Minn., National Guardsman serving with Task Force Victory, has his shot group evaluated during pistol qualification.





Staff Sgt. Allen J. Buxengard, from D Co., 135th Inf. Rgt. (Air Assault), is instructed how to use the P8 pistol during the German qualification.

ing M4 and M16A2 rifles and the M249 squad automatic weapon.

Before the competition, German Soldiers explained in detail to everyone the safety features of the weapons and how to fire them. They constantly supervised and assisted everyone on the firing line during the qualification.

"We all have jobs to do," said Göttmann. "The mission comes first, and then the training aspect of the weapons."

From a distance of 25 meters, American troops fired the pistols at full-size silhouettes, and the rifles at 25-meter paper targets, aiming at the 100-meter silhouettes.

Service members had to put five shots in each target to qualify. Because the German weapons were not individually zeroed to each person, the qualification emphasis is to attain a tight shot group.

For lunch, the German soldiers provided boxes of their 36-hour rations. Several American troops said they had fun eating the chocolate bar inside and trying to guess what everything was before opening the German-labeled packaging.

"They have fun in the day," said Göttmann. "They do two things: train with weapons and get a chance to qualify. We enjoy the day, too. We make good partnerships and connections."

When everyone finished qualifying, those who qualified earned the bronze, silver or gold Schutzenschnur award.

All enlisted personnel may wear the Schutzenschnur cord and medal with their Class A uniforms. Officers may only wear the shooting proficiency medal.

"It's nice to see a smile on everyone's face after qualifying, especially after scoring gold," said Conrad. "The Germans are very willing to put this stuff on for us and they definitely deserve recognition for it."

er. The command also needs to assign an officer in charge to coordinate with the German forces and set up range time. American troops also need to provide ammunition and a list of firers.

"We're always stopping around Bagram and Kabul, and we ask if anyone is interested in qualifying," Göttmann said.

American troops shot the P8 pistol standing and the G36 rifle in the prone position. Then everyone took turns fir-

Obergefreiter (E-3) Chris Bernschein of the German Army takes aim with the M4 rifle during qualification. Bernschein also qualified with the M16A2 rifle and M249 squad automatic weapon. The German Army hosts multiple qualifications every year.



Hygiene

Washing hands, brushing teeth are first-line defense

Story and photo by
Sgt. Douglas DeMaio
20th Public Affairs Detachment



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Lack of personal hygiene can have devastating effects on Soldier and mission readiness.

For this reason, medical practitioners in Afghanistan encourage routine personal hygiene.

"If you look throughout history, the biggest killers of forces have been disease non-battle injuries," said Dr. (Capt.) Nicholas Johnson, a Combined Joint Task Force - 76 medical operations officer. "It isn't until the recent wars that we've actually had fewer casualties to disease non-battle injuries as opposed to actual conflict."

The Army defines personal hygiene as the measures each individual must employ to keep in good physical condition and the precautions he must take to protect himself

from disease.

"Personal hygiene is important to prevent disease," said Maj. Mark Ireland, the chief of force health protection for the CJTF-76 surgeon cell. "The reason why it is so important is so you can prevent yourself from getting sick."

Throughout the day, people place their hands on keyboards, door handles and phones. Doing this causes the spread of germs.

"We've had cases of different types of diarrhea that are caused by people not washing their hands after they go to the bathroom," Ireland said. "You should wash your hands before you eat, and you should wash your hands after you go to the bathroom."

Washing your hands can prevent the spread of disease

and viruses that may cause illness and infection.

"There are several diseases that you must be aware of, especially here in Afghanistan where there is a high level of disease in the local population, and where sanitization throughout the country is very poor," said Ireland.

Keratoconjunctivitis, similar to pink eye, is an infection people get that spreads through individuals not washing their hands.

"It's a very infectious viral disease that affects people's eye sight," Ireland said. Everybody touches their face and eyes several times during the day, so having everyone clean themselves will decrease contamination.

"Another problem people may have if they don't maintain good personal hygiene is

they have a lot of skin irritations and skin rashes," Ireland said.

The buildup of dirt, sweat and dust allows bacteria to grow faster.

Ireland recommends that people use baby wipes every-day to clean themselves if they can't take a shower. If there is a shower facility available, people should use it daily.

Also, using the water to brush your teeth while in the shower is not recommended, but everyone should be brushing their teeth at least once a day.

Drinkable water in Afghanistan is location dependent, and not all the water in country is safe to brush your teeth with, Ireland said.

"You're always safe using bottled water," he said.

AAFES SERVICES HOURS OF OPERATION

Bagram Air Base

PX 0230-1630	Massage 0400-1800
Shoppette 0230-1630	Alterations 0430-1430
Burger King 0430-1730	Embroidery Shop 0430-1430
Food Court 0600-1630	Gift Shops 0430-1430
Coffee Shop 24 hours	Sports Apparel 0430-1430
Barber Shop 0430-1530	Black Ops Store 0430-1530
Day Spa 0400-1600	

Kandahar Airfield

PX 0500-1700	Day Spa 0500-1700
Burger King 0430-1730	Alterations 0500-1700
Pizza Hut 0600-1800	Embroidery Shop 0500-1700
Subway 0600-1430	Gift Shops 0500-1700
Coffee Shop 24hrs	Sports Apparel 0500-1700
Main Barber Shop 0500-1700	Black Ops Store 0500-1700
Lagoon Barber Shop 0300-1700	Leather Shop 0500-1700

TF Phoenix

PX 0430-1630
Barber Shop 0330-1530
Alterations 0330-1630
Coffee Shop 24 hours

Camp Eggers

PX 0430-1630
Barber Shop 0330-1530
Coffee Shop 24 hours

*** All times in Zulu/GMT**

IG responsibilities

Story by

Master Sgt. Thomas Antonaccio

CJTF-76 Office of the Inspector General

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Effective 15 March, the Southern European Task Force assumed responsibility for inspector general support within the Combined Joint Operations Area.

Unlike previous rotations, however, the current team consists of four inspectors general - two on Bagram Airfield and two on Kandahar Airfield.

This increase will allow us to more fully address the needs of a geographically-dispersed combined/joint task force.

The inspector general corps has a proud heritage dating back to 1777, when George Washington needed an IG Corps to ensure the Continental Army was trained and ready.

Much of what the first Army Inspector General, Maj. Gen. Baron Von Steuben, was chartered to do during the Revolutionary War remains relevant today.

IGs still serve as an extension of the eyes, ears, voice, and conscience of the commander and perform the same core functions that Von Steuben did. These four functions are:

- Assistance; informal fact-finding in response to requests for help or information.
- Inspections; tailored to meet the commander's needs and focused on systemic issues.
- Investigations; formal fact-finding in response to allegations of impropriety.

- Teaching and Training; Army systems, processes, procedures and standards.

Before telling the IG about a problem, make sure it is a real problem and not just a peeve. Give the chain of command a chance to solve the problem, because many must be addressed to the command for resolution.

If IG assistance is needed, contact the local IG before those at higher commands.

Be honest about the case, as there are penalties for knowingly providing misleading information.

IGs are not policy makers; if a policy is flawed, submit proposed changes on a DA Form 2028. IGs can only recommend a resolution.

The IG will advise the commander, who can order the resolution. A case can only be resolved on the basis of fact, so claims must be supported by facts.

Don't expect instant action on a request. Be patient and prepared to take "no" for an answer. In any case, the IG will explain why.

The bottom line is that service members, Department of Defense civilians, and family members have the right to make or prepare communications protected by law without fear of unfavorable personnel action being taken or threatened to be taken, or fear of favorable personnel action being withheld or threatened to be withheld.

For an electronic copy of this guide, please send an e-mail to: thomasa@cjt76.centcom.mil. The CJTF-76 Office of the Inspector

General on BAF is located in the JOC building, room 203, APO AE 09354.

Master Sgt. Thomas Antonaccio's DSN number is 231-4028. Lt. Col. Brian Williams' DSN number is 231-4028. His e-mail address is:

WilliamsB@cjt76.centcom.mil.

The Bagram IG's fax DSN number is 231-4027.

The CJTF-76 Office of the Inspector General on KAF is located in the TLS building, APO AE 09355.

Lt. Col. Jayne Jansen's DSN number is 841-1703. Her e-mail address is:

JansenJ@kaf.afgn.army.mil

Sgt. 1st Class Earl Collins' DSN number is 841-1702. His e-mail address is:

CollinsE@kaf.afgn.army.mil

Savings continued from Page 7

es the \$10,000 total to be exceeded may be withdrawn quarterly. Monies must be withdrawn within 90 days of exiting the designated area. Interest will be accrued for up to 90 days after redeployment.

After 90 days, monies will no longer accrue interest, but no penalties will be assessed either. After 90 days, the balance of the SDP account will automatically be remitted to the address provided by the account holder. In order to stop the allotment for the SDP program, you must submit a DD Form 2558 upon arrival at home station.

The SDP program provides a safe, no risk opportunity for service members to earn a considerable interest benefit while serving in a combat zone, qualified hazardous duty area, or while participating in certain contingency operations that are in direct support of a combat zone.



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

QITAB, Uzbekistan -- U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Patricia Garcia, contractor escort with the 416th Expeditionary Mission Support Squadron civil engineer flight at Karshi-Khanabad Air Base, hands a donated teddy bear wrapped in a donated blanket to a child at the Qitab baby orphanage during a humanitarian aid visit there by Garcia and 13 other Airmen, Soldiers, and civilians from the base.

*Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
416th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs*

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

Mission accomplished

MedLog wraps up deployment

Story by
Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The Soldiers of the Army Reserve's 312th Medical Logistics Detachment, from the 145th Medical Battalion in Seagoville, Texas, will be returning home in May after a year of dedication to the Class VIII supply mission here.

The 312th's mission was to provide items from lip balm and sunscreen to medicine, bandages and oxygen tanks to the Operation Enduring Freedom Theater.

"When we first got here, the forward distribution team was at Bagram while the warehouse was located at K2," said Richard R. Pierce, who works customer support and item management.

"We were working off of a 10-foot square concrete slab at first," said Sgt.

Michael Sotelo, the non-commissioned officer-in-charge of shipping and receiving. "We had no security and had to keep the heat away from the products."

In the first half of the deployment, the warehouse and forward distribution team had to communicate through phone calls and e-mail traffic.

"We continued to work out of both locations, and became very efficient," said Staff Sgt. Chris Huth, the NCOIC of unit supply.

Upon the 312th's arrival, there was a two-week turnaround for supply orders. Now, the turnaround is only five days.

To become more efficient and centralize all of the 312th's operations during their deployment, the detachment assisted from June to September last year in the construction of the warehouse that stands on Bagram today.

Problems with construction contracts and equipment delayed the construction of the facility, the biggest being the loss of a shelving contract. A temporary set of shelves were built to keep 157 top-line items ready for distribution.

When the permanent shelves are put in place

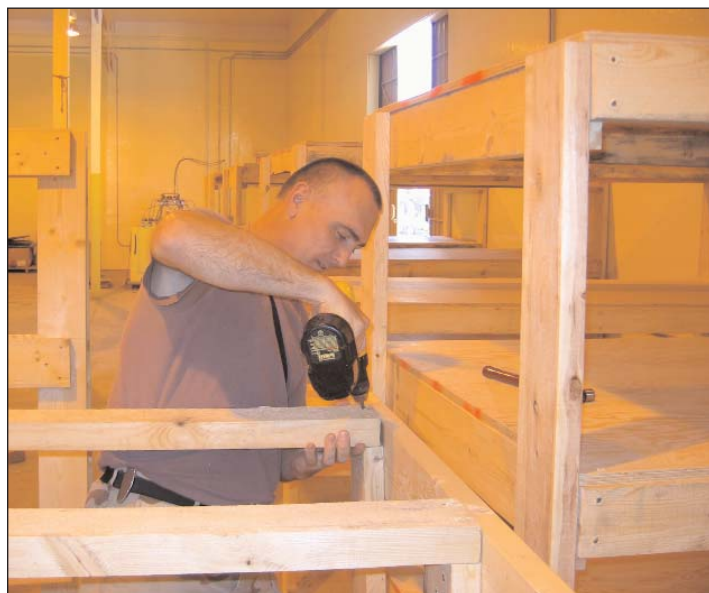


Photo courtesy of 312th Medical Logistics Detachment

Staff Sgt. Edwin V. Foreman builds a temporary shelf for the 312th's line items in the warehouse.

during the next rotation, the facility should be able to have 5,000 line items available.

"We have good Soldiers here," said Sotelo. "We had to make do with what we had for six months, and now we have everything we need. We always came through and customers always got their supplies."

The 312th provided support to 40 local customers, including the Jordanian hospital in Mazar-e-Sharif and the Egyptian and Korean hospitals in Bagram.

Staff Sgt. Jason Brooks, the NCOIC of biomedical maintenance, has taken his shop on 30 missions outside the wire.

"Our office is responsible for the repair and recalibration of the medical equipment in all of the Coalition hospitals and medical facilities in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan," said Brooks. "Last year, 80 percent of all

medical equipment was shipped to and repaired in Germany. Now, only 5 percent is repaired there."

Before the 312th came along, there were no optical mission personnel. Sgt. Caleb Wines, the NCOIC of optical fabrication, has gone out on many Cooperative Medical Assistance missions to provide eyeglasses to Afghans.

"I've made 5,000 pairs of glasses over the year," said Wines. "The missions are a unique service to this area that I

"We had to make do with what we had for six months, and now we have everything we need. We always came through and customers always got their supplies."

Sgt. Michael Sotelo

think the next rotation should continue."

During this rotation, Sgt. Miguel Suyon, Spc. Joseph Siar, and Spc. James Hyatt were promoted for their exceptional service to the 312th's mission.

"They will be the leaders when they deploy again," said Sotelo. "I always tell them, 'learn now so next time you can lead and be the example.'"



Photo courtesy of 312th Medical Logistics Detachment

Sgt. Caleb Wines, the noncommissioned officer in charge of optical fabrication, polishes a lens in his shop.

Aircrew life support

Doing job correctly the first time essential

Story by

Tech. Sgt. Scott Sturkol

416th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

KARSHI-KHANABAD AIR BASE, Uzbekistan - Each aircrew life support technician in the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron's life support section believes their work can mean "life or death" for C-130 Hercules aircrews here.

"Our job is important to the overall mission. Even though there have been very few mishaps, our equipment always has to be in tip-top condition because you just never know when a mishap can occur," said Senior Master Sgt. Tom Jones, aircrew life support craftsman deployed from the Ohio Air National Guard at Mansfield. "You can never be lax inspecting a piece of life support equipment. The piece of equipment you are inspecting could be the difference between a crewmember's or passenger's life being saved or lost."

People don't often think they might have to jump out of an aircraft, but that is what life support technicians prepare for, said Master Sgt. Ralph Bumgardner, an aircrew life support craftsman deployed from the West Virginia Air National Guard at Charleston.

"Oxygen equipment, such as the emergency passenger oxygen systems, may hardly, if ever, get used, but it has to be in the very best operating condition in case it is needed. There are no second chances when an emergency situation arises."

The Air Force life support career field

takes a dedicated and customer-oriented kind of Airman to be successful, said Jones.

"We are jacks of all trades," he said.

"When you have a job where you provide helmets, oxygen masks, parachutes, body armor, survival vests and related accessories, plus life preservers, life

rafts, headsets, restraint harnesses, protective clothing kits, anti-exposure suits, night vision devices, weapons, and emergency passenger oxygen systems, you've got to know what you're doing," said Jones.

He added that it takes a long time for a life support technician to become fully qualified.

"It takes so long because of the vast amount of knowledge we have to acquire to maintain all of this equipment,"

Jones said.

Deploying helps life support technicians improve their skills since this type of environment is where the "night vision goggles meet the night," Jones said.

"These types of deployments, where we get personnel working together who are from active duty, Air National Guard, and the Air Force Reserve, are truly great opportunities to showcase the teamwork necessary to get the job done," he said. "The main thing I have seen is that all life support people are built the same, dedicated to the mission, customer service-oriented and true professionals."

The other critical aspect of their job is the training they give to aircrew members, said Tech. Sgt. Steve Tigges, a life support craftsman deployed from the Oklahoma Air National Guard at Oklahoma City.

"The best part of my job is continuation training to aircrews," he said. "Our responsibility is to not only give continuation classes on our equipment, but to refamiliarize what the aircrew has learned from their survival school training. This is so they can return with honor in the event of aircraft ejection. Combat survival, as well as water survival, is a triennial requirement and we provide it."

Their maintenance of life support equipment, especially on an aircraft, provides the necessary protection when an emergency situation happens, said Master Sgt. John Juhl, a life support craftsman deployed from the Missouri Air National Guard at St. Joseph. However, he said, it takes on a whole different meaning in a deployed environment.

"Our work here is a step above because we are in a wartime environment," he said. "We have to do this job right the first time, every time. The lives of our people depend on it."



Staff Sgt. Andrea Knudson

Tech. Sgt. Heidi Bishop, assigned to the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron life support, performs a 90-day inspection on helmets and masks for aircrews.



Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Master Sgt. Tom Jones, 774th Expeditionary Airlift Support Squadron aircrew life support craftsman deployed from the Ohio Air National Guard at Mansfield, looks over life support equipment on a C-130.

Freedom Watch

May 1, 2005

**Let your plans be dark and
impenetrable as night, and
when you move, fall like a
thunderbolt.**

'The Art of War' Sun Tzu